

ADVENT WEEK 2

The Lord Is with You



And coming to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.'

LUKE 1:28



BEST WE SHOULD EVER think that we are too small or insignificant to help bring about the Kingdom of God, we should remember Mary.

Mary was a young woman from the tiny town of Nazareth, a village so small that

some suggest it had a population of around ninety. She was likely between fourteen and seventeen years of age, not even married yet, when a messenger arrived bearing a most unexpected greeting: “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” She must have thought the messenger out of his mind. Here? In *Nazareth*? With *me*??

But, taking a step back, and looking at the story that the Bible tells as a whole, she need not have been surprised. This seems to be a pattern with God: choosing the smallest of people in the smallest of places and saying, “That’s where I want to be. That’s who I want to work with me.” God asks ridiculously big things of these smallest of people, but consistently assures them that they need not be afraid, because God will be with them.

In the field of Catholic health care, we know a lot about feeling in over our heads. We understand well what it means to feel small in front of very big requests: figuring out how to care for those who don’t have insurance. Dealing with diseases for which there is yet no cure. Managing market stressors. Talking to family members about end-of-life issues. On any given day of the week, we may be tempted to think, “Surely there must be others out there better equipped to handle this situation than we are, here in ... (You can fill in the blank).” And maybe there are. But, so many times, we discover that God does not think our smallness

an obstacle. Indeed, it’s what God treasures most about us. Thus, God continues to make mighty “asks,” inadequate though we may feel. Our greatest (maybe *only*) consolation comes in knowing “the Lord is with us.”

That day in Nazareth, Mary chose to put her trust in God’s promise. She said “yes” to the crazy request that she—of all people—become the mother of the one who would usher in God’s Kingdom. She gave her whole self over to collaborating with God’s vision for the world and it changed her life forever. Indeed, it changed the world forever. The God who promised to be *with her* became Emmanuel—a Hebrew phrase meaning “God is *with us*.”

How would your life today be different if you were able to trust that God is truly *with you* and will not ask of you anything that the two of you cannot handle together? What situation would you address with more courage? What task would you be able to more fully embrace? Ask God for a bit more of Mary’s trust today, and step forward to see what happens.

